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LCPI WORK AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN, 1983

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INTRODUCTION

The Lake Champlain Phenomena Investigation (LCPI) continued its work in 1983 in an attempt to identify the community of unknown animals in Lake Champlain, most commonly referred to as "Champ." As in previous years (see Joseph W. Zarzynski, 1982, LCPI Work at Lake Champlain: 1982, *Cryptozoology,* Vol. 1: 73–77), the intent of the 1983 fieldwork and research was: (1) to maintain periodic field operations through surface surveillance with binoculars and cameras, and the employment of underwater surveys using sonar and scuba monitoring; (2) to proceed with documenting sightings of these "Loch Ness-like animals"; and (3) to pursue further efforts to ensure the passage of a legislative resolution that encourages protection for the Champ animals, and encourages scientific inquiry into their existence.

The known evidence on Champ can be outlined into several categories. Reports of large, unknown aquatic animals in Lake Champlain predate French explorer Samuel de Champlain's 1609 expedition upon the 109-mile-long lake. Although the belief in giant underwater serpents/dragons is almost universal in Indian mythology, several Indian legends, particularly Iroquois and Algonquin lore, reinforce a possible parallelism between this Indian mythology and Champ eyewitness accounts (see Joseph W. Zarzynski, 1983a, Champ—A Zoological Jigsaw Puzzle, *Adirondack Bits 'n' Pieces,* Vol. 1[1]). Besides Indian lore, there are Champ-related art and place names, eyewitness sightings of Champ, several purported Champ surface photographs, and some sonar evidence (see Zarzynski 1983a, above).

LCPI fieldwork in 1983 consisted of 29 days of camera, sonar, and scuba monitoring sessions. Exercises were coordinated by the author. M. Pat Meaney assisted during most of the 1983 sonar and scuba exercise. Further assistance was given by Jack Sullivan, Ted Straiton, Bruce Hallenbeck, Mike Connery, and Jean-Pierre Sylvestre, a visiting French cetacean researcher.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The 29 days of 1983 LCPI-sponsored field operations at Lake Champlain consisted primarily of monitoring with cameras and binoculars from shoreline and vessel vantage points. Camera equipment included: several 35 mm cameras, a super 8 mm movie camera, telephoto lenses, camera tripods, a long-range television video camera and recorder, and other miscellaneous photographic gear.

Five of these 29 days were devoted to the use of a modified Raytheon

FIG. 1.—The author operating a modified Raytheon DE725C sonar unit during the 1983 LCPI fieldwork.

DE725C sonar unit (Fig. 1), connected to a 4.5-foot-long camouflaged aluminum tripod (200 kHz). This was set into position on the lake's bottom by Zarzynski and Meaney by means of scuba diving. This sonar-rigged tripod has been put in action each year since 1980 for sonar data collection (see Zarzynski 1982, above). Sonar dates were August 22–26, 1983.

Lake surface surveillance was conducted at the following locations: Big Snake Bay, New York; Bulwagga Bay, New York; Panton Bay, Vermont; Button Bay, Vermont; Kimball Dock Pier, Vermont; and along other shoreline and lake sites. Vessel surveillance was done from an outboard motor-powered 13-foot-long Avon inflatable boat.

Lake surface surveillance, sonar, and scuba searches were conducted on the following dates: January 8 (consisted entirely of a search for the 1977 Mansi "Champ photograph" site); April 10 (photography and Mansi site search); April 26 (photography); April 27 (photography); May 21 (photography); May 28–30 (photography); June 25–July 2 (photography and scuba); July 25 (photography and Mansi site search); August 6 (photography); August 20–27 (photography, sonar, and scuba); September 4 (photography and Mansi site search); September 17 (photography); and September 18 (photography).

Further interviewing of eyewitnesses and other associated research was

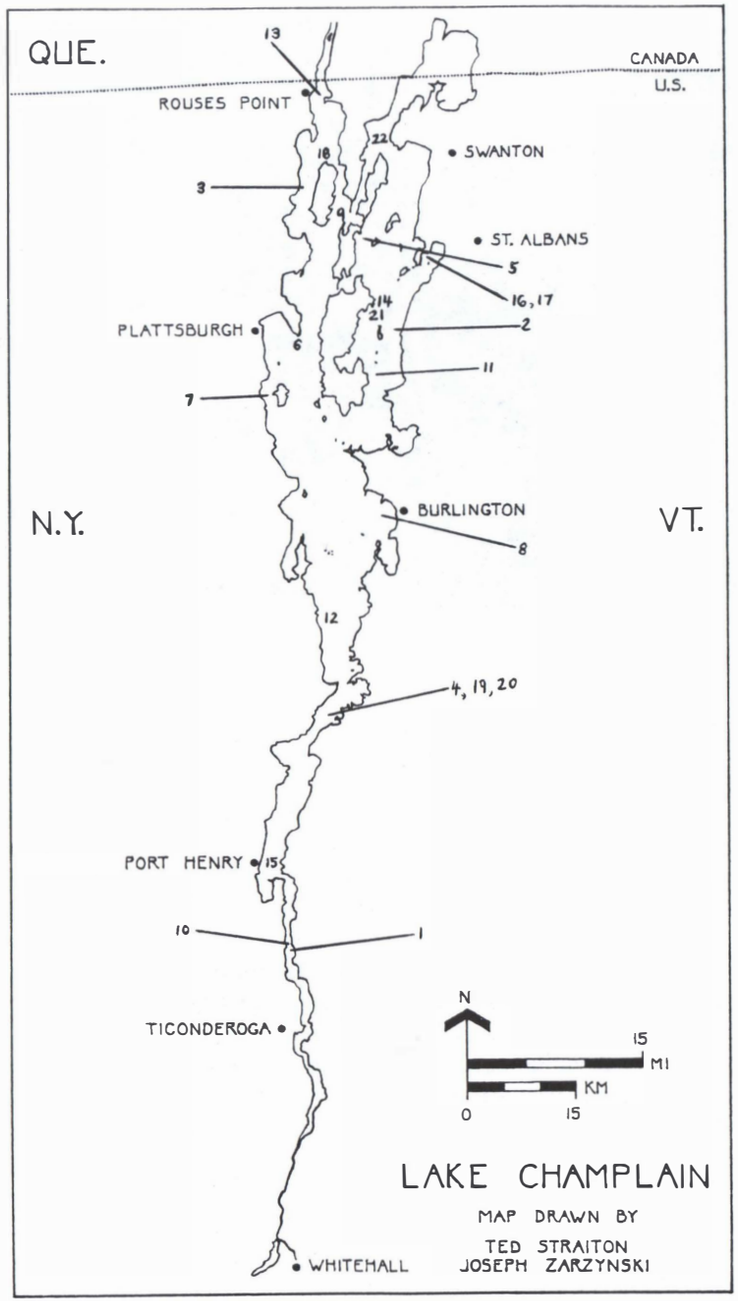

FIG. 2.—Map of Lake Champlain, with numbers indicating the locations of the 22 eyewitness sightings logged by the LCPI during 1983.

conducted throughout the year as part of the LCPI's continuing investigation. Ten scuba dives were made into Lake Champlain during 1983. Of these, seven were directly related to Champ reconnaissance and follow-up sonar deployment/retrieval. These scuba dives were made by Zarzynski and Meaney (June 27 and 30, August 21, 22, 23, 25, and 26).

On June 12, 1983, a Lake Champlain dive was conducted by Sullivan and Zarzynski from a 13-foot-long Boston Whaler boat. This dive was performed as an underwater survey for the State of Vermont's Division of Historic Preservation to conduct a reconnaissance of remains of a wooden vessel found in a bay on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain. This shipwreck had been accidentally located by Zarzynski and Meaney on July 3, 1982, when concluding a week-long cryptozoological expedition at Lake Champlain. A total of three dives in 1982–83 were made at the site by Zarzynski, Meaney, and Sullivan. A report was written and then filed with the State of Vermont, ISC, and other interested parties (see Joseph W. Zarzynski, 1983b, Report on Potash Bay, Lake Champlain Shipwreck-Reconnaissance Survey).

RESULTS

Field operations in 1983 did not result in visual surface sightings of unidentified animals. Sonar and scuba sessions did not result in possible Champ targets or physical remains.

Nonetheless, the LCPI did obtain a number of new reported Champ sightings, most of which took place in 1983. As of this writing, 22 sightings from 1983 have been collected by the LCPI (Fig. 2). In addition, four 1983 sightings await further documentation on the part of the witness(es). To date, a total of 198 sightings of Champ have been collected and catalogued by the LCPI. A brief summary of the 22 recorded sightings in 1983 is outlined below:

—May 3, 1983: Barbara Drinkwine, Theresa Drinkwine, and Ernest Carpenter; a head and humps off Crown Point, New York.

—May 28–30 (weekend of), 1983: Jane and Harry Atkinson; from their boat while halfway between Burton Island, Vermont, and the Sand Bar Causeway.

—June 13, 1983: Beverly Fraser; east of Chazy, New York; "two were present underwater . . . swimming at a very steady rate of around 3 mph."

—June 14, 1983: Dick L. Noel and Tim L. Noel; from a North Hero, Vermont, restaurant while having dinner; 20–25 feet long, dark or black, 3–4 feet high; head, neck, and two to three humps.

—June 15, 1983: Suzanne Starr, Greg Wildasin, and several others; off Fort Cassin—mouth of the Otter Creek, Vermont; four humps (dark); 30 to 40 feet long; "It could have been one large creature or four smaller ones."

—June 16, 1983: Robert and Kevin Algeri; off Cumberland Head—near Lighthouse, New York; Robert Alger believes he saw two animals, one behind the other.
—June 19, 1983: Joe and Toni Krupka; off of Peru Boat Dock—south of Plattsburgh, New York; three to four black ridges totaling 20–30 feet long.
—June 21, 1983: Jane Rowe and husband; three dark humps beyond the Burlington, Vermont, breakwater.
—July 2, 1983: Mr. and Mrs. Philip Jordan; 30 to 40 feet of "large black 'humps'"; at Rutland Railroad causeway, near old railroad bridge and southern point of land, North Hero, Vermont.
—July 2, 1983: Ronald S. Kermani and Susan Kopp; while fishing from a boat; two dark humps 1 mile north of Crown Point, New York, boat launch.
—July 7, 1983: 35 people; at YMCA Camp Greylock, South Hero, Vermont; two brown humps totaling 50 feet long off camp docks.
—July 14, 1983: Mrs. Jane Marsh, Jr., and Mrs. Kimball Prince; six humps totaling 20 feet between Elizabeth Point and Sandy Beach Point, south of Willsboro, New York.
—July 17, 1983: Betty Hebert and husband, with family and friends; two blackish humps off Rouses Point, New York; approximately 10–15 feet long.
—July 17, 1983: Steven and Norma Deforge and their two sons, Darren and Dana; 30 feet in length with a "head . . . like one of those plant-eating dinosaurs"; off South Hero, Vermont.
—August 6, 1983: Beatrice M. Jochum and Mabel R. Merrihew; a black creature, "about 40 feet" with a "head-three humps-tail," from their house near Hospital Creek, Vermont.
—August 10, 1983: Dr. E. James Swinyer, Avis Swinyer, and Irene Domina; St. Albans Bay, Vermont; vicinity on west side of Shantey Point opposite the cove on the east side of Butler's Island, Vermont; two–three dark humps.
—August 12, 1983: Dr. E. James Swinyer and Avis Swinyer; two "wakes" at same place as the August 10, 1983, sighting (Dr. Swinyer felt these may have been two animals).
—August 14, 1983: John W. Herbert and family, from their house on the north shore of Isle La Motte, Vermont; range 1 mile, using binoculars and a telescope; "rather like a submarine moving through the water with deck just awash" (Jennifer E. Herbert claimed to have seen the head of Champ using a telescope).
—August 16, 1983: Richard Alther and 13 other people; from Fort Cassin Point, Vermont; three to four humps, 40 to 50 feet long; vertically 3 feet out of the water.

—August 18, 1983: By several people from Richard Alther's camp at Fort Cassin Point, Vermont; several claim to have seen head and neck of animal.
—August 27, 1983: Mrs. Eva Gauvin and friend, off Camp Marycrest, South Hero, Vermont; 20 to 25 feet long; "small head followed by a long neck shot out of water, quickly followed by two humps" (Mrs. Gauvin thought that possibly a second animal appeared 100 yards away from the first).
—August 27, 1983: Graham Reynolds and two others; off east shore of Alburg, Vermont; 30 to 40 feet long; four humps.

One of the significant aspects of the 1983 sightings is that five reports chronicle the possibility of two or more animals being observed at the same time by the same witness(es).

Future Plans

The LCPI will continue its field operations at Lake Champlain, employing similar strategies as in previous expeditions. It is hoped that research and groundwork will serve to attract professional organizations to donate equipment and/or services toward the search for Champ. Furthermore, the LCPI will pursue more historical research, will continue public education activities, and shall strive to get the Vermont Senate and the Quebec authorities to pass the "Champ resolution," which was passed by the New York State Assembly on April 18, 1983. The resolution encourages further scientific inquiry into the phenomenon. This resolution had been passed in 1982 by the Vermont House of Representatives and the New York Senate.

Future research by the LCPI shall also be directed at a study of the possible food source(s) of Champ. With a more comprehensive data base from recorded sightings (dates, times, locations, weather and lake surface conditions, etc.), combined with an indication of Champ's possible food source(s), Champ's behavioral characteristics may become better understood. A more empirical approach, applying sonar, scuba and photography, may then be better utilized in search procedures. The data and experience from Champ research and fieldwork are providing a clearer perspective on when, where, and how to pursue Champ, and this may eventually lead to successfully locating and identifying the animals.